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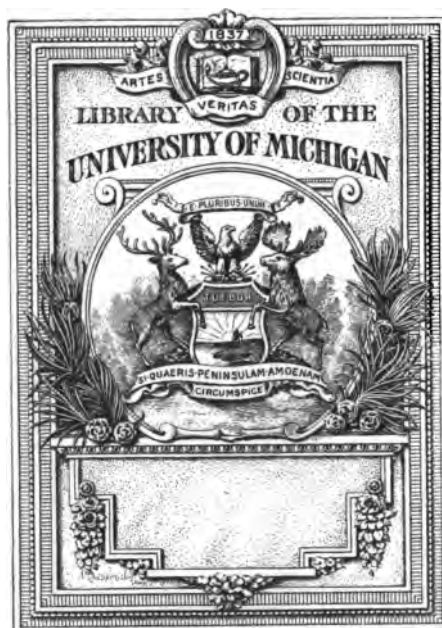
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A true relation
concerning the estate
of New England...

University of Michigan



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A TRUE RELATION
CONCERNING
THE ESTATE OF NEW-ENGLAND.

A TRUE RELATION
=

CONCERNING

THE ESTATE OF NEW-ENGLAND

AS IT WAS PRESENTED TO HIS MA^{TIE}.

[From three copies of a Manuscript written about 1634, found in the British Museum,
and transcribed by Henry F. Waters, A.M. With Notes
by Charles E. Banks, M.D.]

[1886]

Reprinted from the New-England Historical and Genealogical Register for January, 1886.

BOSTON :
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PREFACE.

THE subjoined document is properly to be accounted a part of the harvest of "Gleanings" made by Mr. Waters for the REGISTER, but is here treated separately on account of its length and importance. It was not first discovered by Mr. Waters, however, as a large portion of the same manuscript was copied for John Scribner Jenness, Esq., and printed by him in 1876 in his private edition of "Transcripts of Original Documents relating to New Hampshire," pp. 21-25. In that form the document was seen by but few persons to whom the limited private edition was available, and it is now believed that a complete collated reprint of the manuscript will attract the attention which it deserves, and secure for it a worthy place beside the similar Maverick MS. found by Mr. Waters and printed in the REGISTER (vol. xxxix. pp. 33-48).

It is certain that this document was considered an important collection of information at the time of its writing, as three contemporary copies have been found in the British Museum,—Sloane Collection, Nos. 2505, 3105, 3448,—by Mr. Waters,¹ as stated in his note at the end of the "Relation." It is possible that this im-

¹ Jenness printed a portion of No. 3448 in his "Transcripts."

portance might have arisen from the character of the writer, who may have been sent out officially by the Council for New England to gather material, or he may have been some well known traveller, for the authorship is anonymous. There are some few points in it, however, which help us to give it a date and possibly a habitation and a name. The writer refers to the plague which decimated the Indian tribes of New England, "w^{ch} happened," he says, "about 17 years since." This plague is by general consent assigned to the three years, including 1616-1618, and if we add the "17 years" above stated to the mean of the period occupied by the plague, we shall make 1634 the proximate date of this document.* The single reference the writer makes to his own personality is at the close of the manuscript where he describes himself as "noe professed Scholler," which for purposes of identification is exceedingly vague, and leaves us to infer simply that he was not a college graduate. However, he says, "my aboade was farre distant from neighbo^{rs} . . . myselfe and Colonie allwayes professinge the doctrine discipline of the Church of England." This seems to point, without much doubt, to the settlements at the mouth of the Piscataqua or in the Province of Maine, which were colonized by Churchmen. Among the prominent inhabitants of the former locality, the name of Captain Walter Neale suggests itself as a possibility because of his official connection with the New Hampshire settlements, having been in effect a "Governor" of all the territory owned by Mason and Gorges as

* The original authorities on the subject of the Indian Plague are Mourt's Relation 33, 42, Gorges, Briefe Narration, lib. i. p. 12; Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 195; Cushman, in Young, Chronicles of Pilgrims, 225, 258; Higginson, New England's Plantation, Mass. Hist. Coll., i. 123; Morton, New English Canaan, lib. i. c. 3; White, Planters' Plea, c. iv.; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, lib. i. c. 8.

early as 1630, by virtue of his connection with the Laconia Company. He could well say he was "noe professed Scholler," as he was a soldier by education, "having served," he says, "in all the Kings expeditions for the last twenty years; and commanded for four years the Company of the Artillery Garden," of London.³ He returned to England in August, 1633, and December 12, following, was recommended by King Charles for reappointment as captain of the Artillery Garden.⁴ After his return to London he may have drawn up the "Relation" printed below, for the use of Mason and others, and the date of the paper, as computed above (1634), would seem to make this a plausible guess.⁵

Other names might be suggested, but it would be a mere list of names of prominent persons who could have written it, and such speculations, with not as much basis as the surmise above made, would be unprofitable.

The words in brackets appear in one or more of the copies collated by Mr. Waters, and such interpolation will be noted in the references to foot-notes with the initials H. F. W.

CHARLES E. BANKS.

³ Colonial State Papers, ix. 131.

⁴ Domestic State Papers (Charles I.), cclix. 76; comp., Repertory, xlviii. f. 39b.

⁵ One other piece of collateral evidence may be here considered. The writer says in the Relation, that the patents of "Cassica" (Casco) and "that granted to John Stratton were at my Cominge away forsaken." The Casco patent to which he refers is the one granting 6000 acres to Christopher Levett, who built in 1624 a fortified house on House Island, Portland Harbor. This patent was soon "forsaken" by Levett, and not till the spring of 1633 did George Cleeves settle there under this "dead and outworne title," as Trelawny styles it. Neale may not have known in August, 1633, of this settlement of Cleeves when he sailed for England, and so stated that it was "forsaken" at his "coming away." Stratton had a grant of 2000 acres, 1 December, 1631, on the south side of Cape Porpus, but never settled there. (Trelawny Papers, 102, 199; comp. Levett, Voyage into New England, *passim*.)

A [TRUE] RELATION CONCERNYNGE THE ESTATE OF
NEW=ENGLAND

[AS IT WAS PRESENTED TO HIS MA^{TIE}].

A Relation Concerninge New England

ffor the perfect understandinge the state of New England these three
thinges deserue consideraçon viz^t,

- i The Countrie,
- 2 The Comodities :
- 3 The Inhabitants :

THE COUNTRYE.

Scit^tuation
and
Clymate. New=England is scituate in the North part of the Maine Con-
tinent of America included wthin the degrees of 40 and 48 of
Northerly Latitude a Clymate through out all the world esteem-
ed temperate and healthfull and by experience it is found that noe
Countrie enioyeth a more salubrious aire then New-England, and
though the Winter be more sharpe then ordinariely heare, yett it
is lesse offenseiue by reason the aire is more cleer and the cold all-
wayes drie

Sea Coasts
and Inland
parts. The sea coast is rather a lowe then a high land full of headlands
or causies w^{ch} are Rocky The Inmost parts of the countrie are

mountaynous intermixed wth fruitfull valleyes and large Lakes, w^{ch} want not store of good ffish the hills are noe where barren though in some places stonie, but are fruitfull in trees and grasse

Rivers. The Countrie is full of Rive^r ffresh brookes and springes the rive^r abound in plentie of excellent ffish as sturgion Basse &c. yett are they full of falls w^{ch} makes them not navigable farr into the land.

Harbours. There is noe countrie greate^r stored of good Harbours then in New-England.

Seas. The seas borderinge the shore are full of Islands and plentiful^{lie} stored wth the best ffish as Codd Hake Haddock Mackerell &c :

Soile. The Soyle of New-England is generally fruitfull abounding in Wood of all sorts proper to this Countrie, there are besides great plentie of Pyne ffr spruce and some Cædar it is fruitfull in grasse where the highnes of the woods hinder it not, the Corne used in the countrie is the Indian Maize called Turkey Wheate, but all sorts of English graine, where they are sowne thriue exceeding well, the soyle naturally produces wild veynes in abundance and some whose grapes for bignes surpasse the grapes of ffrance and were they husbanded would questioneless excell in goodnes there are three sorts of plants whereof Lynnen and Cordage may bee made, the coursest sort excells our hempe and the finest may equall the coursest silke

Beastes. The land doth nourish abundance of deere beares and the beasts called moose peculier to those countries, and the brookes Rive^r and ponds are well stored wth Beave^r Otte^r and musquashes, there are alsoe diue^r kindes of small beasts but those offensive are onely wolues and ffoxes

foule. There is alsoe great plenty of all sorts of ffoule in their seuerall seasons especially Turkyes Geese and Ducks :

fertillie. To conclude what soeuer the earth in England or ffrance doth either nourish or produce though it may not att this present bee found in New England yett beinge transported or planted will thriue and growe there to more then an ordinarie perfection

Off theis Comodities onely ffish and Beave^r skins are for the
p^rsent made use of

The fish of this parts is noe where excelled and brings into England yearely great store of ready money from ffrence and Spaine The Beaver likewise w^{ch} comes from thence preserues wth in this kingdome both money and merchandises w^{ch} otherwise would bee exported for the same into ffrence and other countries :

It is most probable that salt may bee made in New England ffor the sunn and weather are of sufficient strength to make it. And soe large a tract of land and so full of Marishes by the sea side cannot waunt some grownds proper for that use

Natives. The natives of the Countrey are att this tyme verie few in number though heretofore populous destroyed by a great and generall plague w^{ch} happined about 17 yeares since, leauinge not the fortieth person liveinge since w^{ch} time they have newe^r increased, they liue nere and amonge the English but are beneficiall to them onely in the trade of Beauer w^{ch} they exchange for our Comodities Theire want of people makes them not feared by us as not beinge able to doe much mischeife; w^{ch} otherwise doubtles



they would doe as was found by lamentable experience the last yeare.⁶

What the manneⁿ and customes of these Indians are is trulie and att large related by a ffrenchman whose booke is translated into English intituled Nova ffancia:⁷

The Planteⁿ of newe England are of three seuerall nations, English ffrench and Dutch

Dutch plan-
tacon.

The Dutch are seated uppon the southwest part of New England on the uttermost borde^r confininge Virginia they are there planted by authoritie from the Indian Companie, not acknowledging his Ma^{ties} royaltie, who though they are not proffitabie to theire masteⁿ by reason of the great charge in maintenance of servants and souldieⁿ, yett are they a great hindrance to the English Colonies in their trade of Beave^r, ffor that one Rive^r whereon they are settled yeilds as much (if not more) beaver then all the rest of New England planted by the English, and may bee esteemed yearelie about tenn thousand pounds waight of beave^r the Riveⁿ and Countries adioyninge where they are planted is the best part of New=England onely they haue noe ffishing

ffrench.

The ffrench are now possessed of that w^{ch} formerlie was the Scottish plantations beinge on the Northeast part of New England, they doe already beeginn to excede the bounds intended by his Ma^{tie} for their Lymitts and doe day(lie) furnish the Indians wth armes and munition to the great dange^r and preiudice of the English they alsoe intend to prohibite the English their accustomed traffique in those parts for these reasons they are iustlie seated^s to proue ill neighbouⁿ.

⁶ The "lamentable experience" which was encountered the "last yeare," that is 1633, if our date is correct, may be one of the numerous plots laid by the Narraganset Indians against the English, as told by Winthrop and other contemporary writers.

⁷ Marc Lescarbot's *Historie de la Nouvelle France*, first published in Paris, 1609. It was translated into English by Erondelle and published in London without date, and this edition is probably the one referred to.

⁸ No. 3105 has "feared." I have inserted two words [in brackets] from that MS., viz. "made" and "since."—H. F. W.

English. The English are planted in the middest betwixt the Dutch and french in a Countrey farr exceedinge that of the french though somewhat inferiour to the Dutch habitacon.

This part of the countrey was manie yeares since planted by the English in the time and by the meanes of the Lord Cheife Justice Popham and some others, and especially by S^r ffrdinando Gorges knight but those plantacons prospered not through the ill choice [made] of places comodious for habitation⁹

The Present Inhabitants of New Plymouth were the first that settled a plantation to any purpose in New England who went thither to inhIBUTE about some 15 yeares [since]¹⁰ but the great numbe^r of people w^{ch} makes the Countrey seeme now somewhat populous wth English hath been transported wthin these 9 yeares under the govern^t of M^r Indicott and M^r Winthrop:¹¹ who haue seated themselues in the west and more southerlie part of the countrey about the same tyme and since diue^r others private Colonies haue been planted in the more Esterlie and Northern parts

Patents. The English are planted in this Countrey by vertue of Patents granted unto them from the President and Counsell of New England w^{ch} soe farr as I can understand are in number 18 viz^t

- i The Patent of New Plymouth
- 2 The Patent of Massachusetts Baye:
- 3 The Patent of Agawam granted to Captaine John Mason

⁹ The phrase "prospered not" may be used by some advocate of the permanency of the Popham Colony to show that it was not abandoned, but merely unprosperous. This may be strengthened by a quotation from the succeeding paragraph, which says that the Plymouth Colony was the first plantation settled "to any purpose." On the contrary, Maverick's statement (Reg. xxxix. 35) leaves no doubt that it was abandoned. See an article by the writer of these notes on "Settlements in Maine Prior to 1620," in the Maine Genealogical and Historical Recorder, vol. ii. No. 4, in which the Popham case is discussed.

¹⁰ This would seem to make the date of the paper 1635.

¹¹ This period is hard to reckon for the purposes of ascertaining the date of the manuscript. The Dorchester Company established their plantation at Cape Ann in 1623 (Palfrey, History of New England, i. 285), but Endicott did not arrive till 1628, and Winthrop two years later. Perhaps the author refers to the settlement of Conant at Salem in the fall of 1626, to which date if we add nine years we shall have 1635, near enough to 1634 for all practical purposes of determining the date.

- Patent granted to S^r fferdinando Gorges
- Patent of Lacouia granted to S^r fferdinando Gorges and John Mason
- Patent of Pascataquacke granted to S^r fferdinando Gorges and others
- Patent granted Edward Hilton
- Patent of Accauminticus granted to Captaine Norton wth
- Patent granted to John Stratton about Cape Porpus
- Patents of Sohaketocke granted to Richard Vynes and Thomas Lewis
- Patent granted to Captaine Thomas Cañock of black
- Patent granted to M^r Trelanye of Cape Elizabeth
- Patent of Casco granted to Captaine Levitt
- Patent of Pechipsote granted to Thomas Purchis and
- Patent granted to Richard Bradshaw of the Northeast
- Patent of Pechipsot River
- Patent of Quinabecke belonging to them of New Plym-
- Patent of Sagadahock granted to Crispe and othe^r
- Patent of Pennaquid granted to M^r: Alde^r and M^r Elbridge
- Patent granted of Penobscott to M^r Sherlie, and othe^r
- Patents [those] granted to S^r fferdinando Gorges, and John Mason are included wthin the Patent last granted to the inhabitants of the Massachusetts Bay
- which Patents which matter there hath been and still remains
- that Sagadahock was never planted.¹² That of

¹² The name of the Popham Colony, but to the Plough colonists, who under-
 stood the name of Sagadahoc, probably about Cape Small Point. See an
 account of the "Plough Patent" in Maine Genealogical Recorder (1885),
 Vol. 1, p. 10.

Cassica, and that granted to John Stratton were at my comminge away forsaken

Extent of
Patents. The Patent of Penobscott is largest of extent, it comprehendinge (as is pretended) nere 40 leagues in length yett it is planted but wth one house, And is now possessed by the ffrench¹³

The English in their seuerall patents are planted along the sea coast and haue their habitations nere adioyning to Rive^r navigable ffor shippinge, or Barkes, the charge and difficultie of transportinge provision by land, ffor want of horses causes the Inland parts to bee yett unpeopled

The Plantaçons beginninge at y^e most Southerlie, w^{ch} is new Plymouth and endinge at penobscott, containe in length alonge the sea cost about 70 leagues and are peopled with more then 3000[0]¹⁴ Persons whereof new Plimouth may containe well nere 1800, the Massachusetts (more then 20000) the rest of the Patents beinge planted wth the residue

Cattle. Att my Comeinge ouer there was estimated to bee att the least 1200 head of kyne belonging to the seuerall plantaçons, And are now increased to : 5000:¹⁵ or there abouts, great store of swyne and goates and some horses

The Inhabitants haue in all places convenient houses and good quantitie of cleered land ffor Corne

Difference
of Patents. The aboue mençoned Patents are not all of one kinde, for some are in the nature of Corporaçons and haue power to make Lawes, ffor the governinge of their plantaçons, others are but onely assignm^t of soe much land to bee planted and possessed w^{thout} power of governm^t.

¹³ The Plymouth Pilgrims had a trading post at Penobscot, and the "one house" spoken of is probably the fruck house of their trading station. The French captured this and seized that portion of Maine in 1635, and as the writer states that it "is now possessed by the ffrench," the inference is that this paper could not have been written till that year. It would seem that the paper was not composed for some time after the author left the country, and that he added such sentences as the above from subsequent information. This is the only theory that will reconcile the variety of internal evidence as to its date.

¹⁴ No. 3448 says 3000. The other two manuscripts say 30000, which is evidently correct.—H. F. W.

¹⁵ "And since augmented to 6000 or thereabouts," says No. 3105.—H. F. W.

Of the first sort are onely theis fflower viz^t:

- i New Plymouth
- 2 Massachusetts
- 3 Pascatequack
- 4 & Pemaquid

Governm^t. The Civill governm^t of the Colonies remaine in the power of those who are Principall in the Patents of w^{ch} those w^{ch} haue authoritie to establish lawes, doe execute their Jurisdiction (soe farr as I could understand) as neere as may bee accordinge to the lawes of England, And those who haue not that legall powe^r doe governe their servants and Tennants in a Civill way, soe farr as they are able

Defects. The defects in theis plantations ffor the present, as I conceive, are onely theis

i The Inhabitants (except in the Massachusetts Bay) are too farr scattered one from an other a longe the coast, soe that they cannot uppon any occasion Reunite themselues to oppose an enemye

2 There is fewe fforts¹⁶ nor places of strength in all the Countrie

3 There are but few of those, who haue Patents granted unto them that doe obserue the Lawes, and orde^r of Plantation appointed unto them in their Patents and expressed in the grand Patent granted by his Ma^{tie} to the President and Councill

4 When there happeneth any question betweene the Plante^r of seuerall Patents, those quarrells are seldome, or neuer ended because there is none in the countrie that hath authoritie to decide them; every mans powe^r beinge limitted, wth his owne Patent

5 There wants an uniformytie in the Lawes and Customes of seuerall Patents and alsoe a generall unitie, in thinges that concerne the publike good of the Countrie

As Concerninge matte^r of Religion, because my aboade was

¹⁶ "There is noe ffort nor place," etc., says No. 3105. "There wants yett some store of fforts or places," etc., says No. 2305.—H. P. W.

farre distant ffrom neighbo^r and noe professed Scholler, I was therefore little acquainted wth other mens dissagreeinge opinions, and my selfe and Colonie allwayes professinge the doctrine discipline of the Church of England I was not curious after that of othe^r w^{ch} then concerned me nott

FFINIS

